

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ISO-00 CU-02 OMB-01 CIEP-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OPR-01 SY-04 AID-05

EUR-08 NIC-01 SIL-01 LAB-01 SCCT-01 /083 W

----- 090554

R 231210Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 911

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 12706

KUWAIT PASS DOHA

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL EAID LE US XF

SUBJECT: AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT'S HANDLING OF STUDENT UNREST

SUMMARY: WHILE THERE REMAINS POSSIBILITY THAT STUDENT UNREST  
COULD ERUPT AGAIN AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT (AUB) AS  
RECENTLY-BEGUN FALL SEMESTER PROCEEDS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT  
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PROTEST CAMPAIGN GENERATED BY UNIVERSITY'S DECISION TO DENY

ADMITTANCE TO 103 TROUBLEMAKING STUDENTS INVOLVED IN LAST YEAR'S CAMPUS UPHEAVALS HAS SO FAR FAILED TO GATHER MUCH STEAM. RESULT COULD WELL BE MUCH-NEEDED SHOT IN ARM THAT WILL HELP AUB ADMINISTRATION DEAL MORE EFFECTIVELY IN FUTURE WITH STUDENT UNREST AND OTHER PRESSING PROBLEMS WHICH BESET THE UNIVERSITY. END SUMMARY.

1. ADDRESSEE POSTS MAY WISH TO DRAW ON FOLLOWING SHOULD QUESTION OF SITUATION AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT BE RAISED WITH THEM BY HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OR OTHERS WITH AN INTEREST IN AUB.

2. LAST SPRING AUB WENT THROUGH LONGEST AND MOST COSTLY STUDENT STRIKE IN ITS HISTORY. FOR ALMOST SIX WEEKS BEGINNING ON MARCH 18, KEY BUILDINGS ON CAMPUS WERE OCCUPIED BY MILITANT STUDENTS OF A MIXED LEFTIST, PALESTINIAN PERSUASION WHO WERE OSTENSIBLY DEMANDING CANCELLATION OF A PLANNED TUITION INCREASE, CONTINUATION OF CERTAIN COURSES OF STUDY, AND STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP AND ADMISSION COMMITTEES. IN FACT, STRIKERS' REAL AIM APPEARED AT TIMES TO BE TO BRING ABOUT TOTAL COLLAPSE AND CLOSURE OF AUB AND AT OTHER TIMES INSTALLATION OF STUDENT CONTROL OR CERTAINLY STUDENT VETO OVER UNIVERSITY'S ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS. THROUGHOUT THE STRIKE, THE CAMPUS, EXCEPT FOR ON-CAMPUS APARTMENTS AND HOUSES OF FACULTY AND STAFF, WAS COMPLETELY UNDER STUDENT CONTROL. ALL GATES WERE MANNED BY STICK-CARRYING TEAMS OF STUDENTS AND EACH MAJOR BUILDING HAD ITS STUDENT OCCUPIERS.

3. IT WAS THIS OCCUPATION, AND PARTICULARLY VANDALISM PERPETRATED BY THE OCCUPIERS, WHILE FINALLY GAVE AUB ADMINISTRATION A LEGAL WEAPON WITH WHICH TO BREAK THE STRIKE. AUB FILED COURT ACTION WITH LEBANESE JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES WHICH LED, EARLY ON MORNING OF APRIL 24, TO LEBANESE SECURITY FORCES ENTERING AUB IN A SWIFT, WELL PLANNED ACTION THAT RESULTED IN ARREST OF 60 STUDENT OCCUPIERS.

4. BECAUSE OF CLASS-TIME LOST DURING STRIKE, AUB ADMINISTRATION SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED CANCELLING SPRING SEMESTER. AFTER THE SCHOOL REGAINED CONTROL OF ITS CAMPUS AND BEGAN TO ASSESS DAMAGE, CHANCES OF CONTINUING THAT SEMESTER LOOKED EVEN SLIMMER. TO BE SURE, MUCH DAMAGE--SUCH AS SPRAY-PAINTED SLOGANS COVERING EVERY SURFACE, PLUS BROKEN DOORS AND WINDOWS--WAS MORE AN ANNOYANCE THAN A HINDRANCE, BUT DESTRUCTION OF FURNITURE, OFFICE MACHINES AND PARTICULARLY

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FILES AND RECORDS WOULD HAVE MADE IT EASY FOR AUB TO JUSTIFY CANCELLATION. IN THE END, HOWEVER, DECISION WAS MADE TO RE-REGISTER ALL STUDENTS AND BEGIN A DRASTICALLY SHORTENED SEMESTER WITH SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED LIST OF COURSE OFFERINGS. STUDENTS LOST THOSE COURSES THAT WERE CANCELLED, BUT THOSE LOSING ALL THEIR COURSES WERE ALLOWED TO SIGN UP FOR ONE REPLACEMENT COURSE. SALVAGE RATE IN ARTS AND SCIENCE APPEARS TO HAVE AVERAGED TWO OR THREE COURSES OUT OF FIVE PER STUDENT.

5. DESPITE THIS STRINGENCY, MOST STUDENTS, INCLUDING THE BY-NOW-RELEASED OCCUPIERS, RETURNED TO CAMPUS AND CLASSES RESUMED. ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SOME FURTHER INCIDENTS BETWEEN WOULD-BE DEMONSTRATORS AND LEBANESE SECURITY POLICE STILL ON CAMPUS, SECURITY OFFICERS WERE SOON WITHDRAWN AND SEMESTER FINISHED QUIETLY. SUMMER SCHOOL, BECAUSE OF COURSES LOST IN SPRING, WAS A SELLOUT WITH PRIORITY GOING WHERE POSSIBLE TO SENIORS AND SECOND-YEAR GRADUATE STUDENTS.

6. TO MAINTAIN ITS CONTROL OVER THE UNIVERSITY AND IN DEFERENCE TO IRATE PARENTS OF THOSE STUDENTS WHO WANTED TO STUDY BUT COULDN'T BECAUSE OF STRIKE, AUB ADMINISTRATION HAD TO TAKE PUNITIVE ACTION AGAINST THE STRIKE'S RINGLEADERS. (SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THIS TIME THERE WAS MUCH MORE GOL, PUBLIC AND FACULTY SUPPORT FOR AUB'S STAND AGAINST THE STRIKERS THAN THERE WAS IN CONNECTION WITH AUB'S LAST MAJOR CAMPUS UPHEAVAL IN 1971.) CONSEQUENTLY, ON JULY 23 LETTERS WERE SENT BY AUB ADMINISTRATION TO 103 STUDENTS INFORMING THEM THAT THEY WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE ALLOWED TO REGISTER FOR 1974 FALL SEMESTER. (IN ADDITION, WARNING LETTERS WERE SENT TO SEVERAL HUNDRED OTHER STUDENTS.) OF THOSE EXPELLED, 47 WERE JORDANIAN, 44 LEBANESE, 4 SYRIANS, 2 AMERICANS, 2 "PALESTINIANS", AND ONE LIBYAN, YEMENI, SAUDI AND KUWAITI. (IN ADDITION TO THE 2 "PALESTINIANS", 55 OF THIS TOTAL--INCLUDING BOTH AMERICANS AND 44 JORDANIANS--WERE OF PALESTINIAN ORIGIN.)

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RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OPR-01 SY-04 AID-05

EUR-08 NIC-01 SIL-01 LAB-01 SCCT-01 (ISO)W

----- 091530

R 231210Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 912

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD UNN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 12706

7. WORDING OF AUB'S "EXPULSION" LETTER IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT MEANT THAT 30 OR SO STUDENTS (AMONG 103 RECIPIENTS) WHO NEEDED ONLY SUMMER SCHOOL TO COMPLETE GRADUATE OR POST-GRADUATE PROGRAMS WERE ALLOWED TO DO SO. IN STRICT SENSE OF TERM, THEREFORE, AUB'S ACTION WAS NOT RPT NOT AN "EXPULSION." BY EXERCISING ITS RIGHT OF SELECTIVE ADMISSION, AUB WAS UNDERSCORING ITS PREROGATIVE AS PRIVATE INSTITUTION AND REASSERTING ITS CONTROL OVER A FUNCTION WHICH MILITANTS HAD LONG SOUGHT TO INFLUENCE IF NOT CONTROL. AT SAME TIME, AUB WAS GAMBLING--AND OUTCOME OF THAT GAMBLE IS CONFIDENTIAL

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STILL UNCLEAR--THAT ITS ACTION WOULD DECREASE, RATHER THAN INCREASE, THREAT OF FURTHER STUDENT UNREST IN 1974-75 ACADEMIC YEAR. PRIOR TO BEGINNING OF FALL SEMESTER ON SEPT 23, NOTICEABLE AGITATION WAS TAKING PLACE AMONG AND BETWEEN CERTAIN DISAFFECTED STUDENTS, LOCAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR LEFTIST-PALESTINIAN BACKERS WITH VIEW TO BRINGING PRESSURE ON AUB TO WITHDRAW ITS "EXPULSION" DECISION AND TO FOMENT ADDITIONAL CAMPUS DISTRUBANCES IF THIS OBJECTIVE WAS NOT ATTAINED. THESE TACTICS INCLUDED, INTER ALIA, AN APPEAL MADE TO HEADS OF VARIOUS ARAB GOVTS. TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE WITH AUB (AND USG) TO FORCE UNIVERSITY TO RELENT IN ENFORCING ITS DECISION.

8. REGISTRATION FOR FALL SEMESTER WENT OFF WITHOUT INCIDENT. AUB IS HOLDING TO ITS ORIGINAL DECISION AND HAS READMITTED NONE OF THE 103 "EXPELLEES"--SOME OF WHOM HAVE ALREADY DESPAIRED OF READMITTANCE AND SOUGHT ENROLLMENT IN UNIVERSITIES IN BAGHDAD AND ELSEWHERE--DESPITE INTERCESSIONS MADE ON THEIR BEHALF BY A WIDE VARIETY OF PEOPLE, INCLUDING UNHAPPY PARENTS AND CERTAIN LOCAL POLITICIANS. TO BEST OUR KNOWLEDGE, HOWEVER, HIGH-LEVEL GOL AUTHORITIES HAVE SO FAR NOT RPT NOT BEEN PARTY TO THIS CAMPAIGN, AND NO OTHER INFLUENTIAL ARAB GOVTS. HAVE LENT EFFECTIVE SUPPORT TO IT. STUDENT DISSIDENTS SEEM BAFFLED BY THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS AND BY AUB'S HARD LINE, AND THEIR EFFORTS TO AROUSE STUDENT, PUBLIC

AND OFFICIAL OPINION IN SUPPORT OF THEIR CAUSE HAVE SO FAR NOT MET WITH MUCH SUCCESS.

9. WHILE IT POSSIBLE THAT MORE TROUBLE COULD STILL ERUPT AT AUB AS RESULT OF DESPERATE STUDENT-LEFTIST-PALESTINIAN AGITATION DESCRIBED ABOVE (PARTICULARLY IF POTENTIAL TROUBLEMAKERS FINALLY SUCCEED IN CAPITALIZING ON CURRENT LEBANESE CABINET CRISIS AND ACCOMPANYING GOL INDECISIVENESS TO PRESS THEIR DEMANDS TO POINT OF OPEN CONFRONTATION WITH AUB ADMINISTRATION), IT NOW LOOKS AS IF UNIVERSITY'S POSITION HAS GOOD CHANCE OF CARRYING THE DAY. IF THIS HAPPENS, AUB'S MUCH-MALIGNED ADMINISTRATION--WHICH HAS IN PAST OFTEN (AND SOMETIMES JUSTLY) BEEN CRITICIZED FOR AN OVERLY RIGID, CONSERVATIVE AND SHORT-SIGHTED APPROACH IN DEALING WITH PROBLEM OF STUDENT UNREST--MAY HAVE REASON TO CONGRATULATE ITSELF FOR INTELLIGENT AND PRINCIPLED HANDLING OF A MATTER WHICH MIGHT EASILY HAVE AGAIN GOTTEN OUT OF HAND. WHILE UNIVERSITY STILL HAS LONG WAY TO GO TWARD SOLVING ITS PRESSING FINANCIAL PROBLEMS AND IMPROVING ITS SOMEWHAT HESITANT RESPONSIVENESS TO CHANGING ACADEMIC

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NEEDS IN ME, IT WILL HAVE TAKEN BIG STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION BY COMING TO EFFECTIVE GRIPS WITH A PROBLEM THAT HAD THREATENED TO DESTROY ITS EXISTENCE AS A VIABLE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING.

10. A PRINCIPAL FACTOR IN THE CURRENTLY RELATIVELY SATISFACTORY SITUATION AT AUB IS THE POSITION OF LEBANESE PRESIDENT FRANGIE. BEFORE STUDENTS WERE REFUSED PERMISSION TO RE-REGISTER, THE UNIVERSITY'S ACTION RECEIVED THE APPROVAL OF THE GOL. IN OBTAINING THIS APPROVAL, WITH LITTLE OR NO DIFFICULTY, THE UNIVERSITY LEARNED AND THE AMBASSADOR CONFIRMED THAT PRESIDENT FRANGIE PERSONALLY SUPPORTED THE UNIVERSITY'S ACTION AND EVEN WENT FURTHER BY INDICATING THAT HE WOULD PERSONALLY BE DISTRESSED IF THE DISCIPLINARY STEPS WERE NOT RPT NOT TAKEN. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TODAY AND THE SITUATION PREVAILING IN 1971 IS THAT DURING THE LATTER EARLIER PERIOD THE GOVERNMENT WAS AT BEST AMBIVALENT IN ITS SUPPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY WHEREAS TODAY PRESIDENT FRANGIE, WHO MAY HAVE LEARNED FROM THE 1971 SITUATION, IS CURRENTLY SUPPORTING 100 PERCENT THE UNIVERSITY'S DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

GODLEY

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## Message Attributes

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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 23 OCT 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** shawdg  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
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30 JUN 2005

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**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT'S HANDLING OF STUDENT UNREST SUMMARY: WHILE THERE REMAINS POSSIBILITY THAT STUDENT UNREST  
**TAGS:** SCUL, EAID, LE, US, XF, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005